SUPERMAN® & BIG BARDA™
ACTION COMICS®
75¢
592
SEPT. 87
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BACK OFF, SUPERMAN! THE CREATURE CALLED SLEEZ MUST DIE!
THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL ME FIRST, BARDA!
BY JOHN BYRNE

IT WAS A SIMPLE ENOUGH MISTAKE.
THE KIND OF MISTAKE ALMOST ANYONE COULD HAVE MADE.
A RIGHT TURN INSTEAD OF A LEFT.
EASILY NOTICED... EASILY RECTIFIED...
NOT AT ALL THE SORT OF THING YOU'D EXPECT TO LEAD YOU INTO...

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...A WALK ON THE DARKSIDE!
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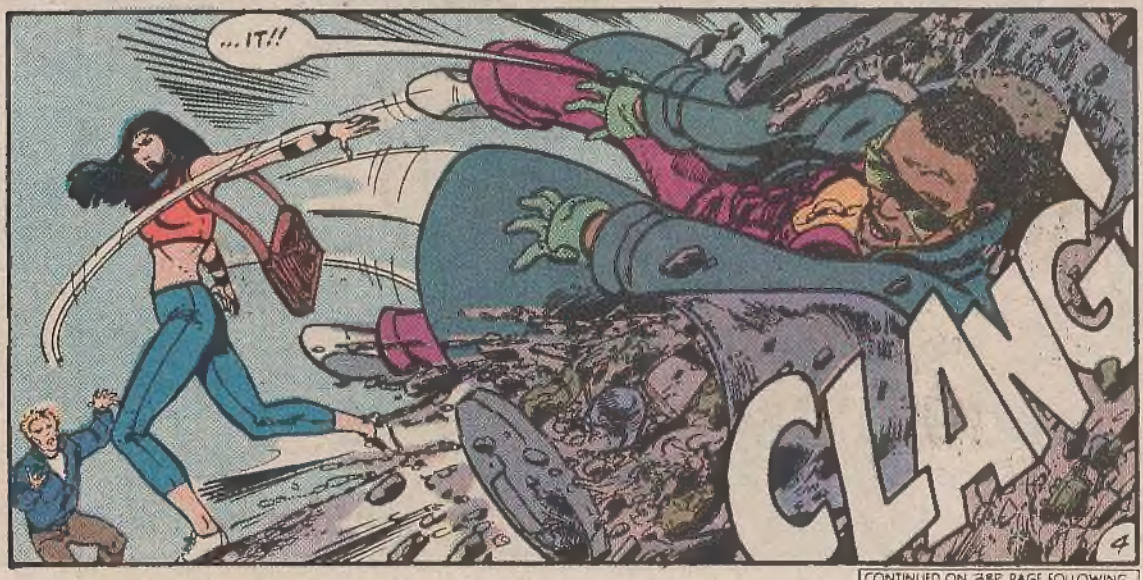
Background inks: Keith Williams
lettering: John Costanza • coloring: Tom Ziuko
editing: Michael Carlin & Andrew Helfer
SUPERMAN
created by
JERRY SIEGEL
and
JOE SHUSTER
BIG BARDA
created by
JACK KIRBY
WHAT MANNER OF PLACE IS THIS?
ROOMS BY HR. DAY
HOTE
I'D HOPED TO HAVE SEEN THE LAST OF SUCH HELLHOLES WHEN I DEPARTED FROM APOKOLIPS!
WHOOOO-WHEE!
GIRLS
TWENTY

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE SUCH SQUALOR EXISTS IN THE VERY HEART OF METROPOLIS!
THIS IS A PLACE MUCH BETTER SUITED TO THE SHADOWS NEAR THE FIREPITS OF MY HOME PLANET.
HEY, BIG MAMA!

EH?
YOU BLOCK MY PATH, STRANGER...
WHO'S YOUR OLD MAN, SWEETCAKES?
WHOEVER HE IS, HE AIN'T PAYIN' YOU ENOUGH!
YOU COME WORK FOR THE FANCY MAN, BABES.
I'LL MAKE YOU RICH!

YOUR SPEECH IS... STRANGE, FRIEND.
CAN YOU NOT STATE YOUR MEANING MORE CLEARLY?
HHKA! TALK ABOUT STRANGE SPEECH! WHERE'D YOU PICK UP THAT FUNKY ACCENT, BIG MAMA?
COME TELL THE FANCY MAN ALL ABOUT...
LIVE NOW



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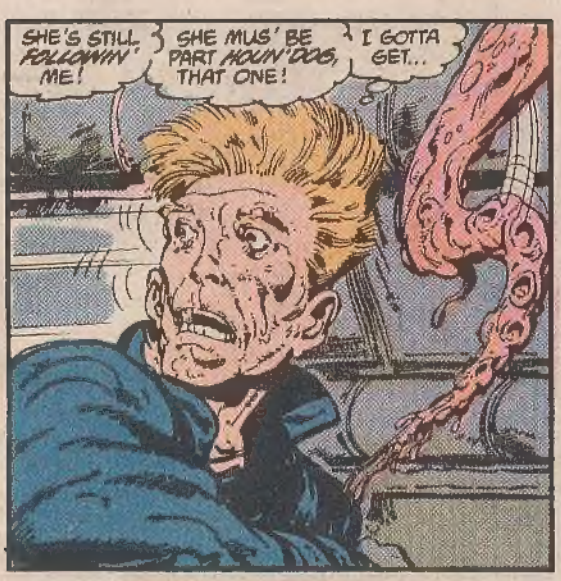
INSOLENT DOG! ONLY ONE MAN MAY TOUCH BIG BARDA! ONLY...
EH?
Live on Stage
NOW
A PURSE SNATCHER...??
HE'S GOT MY BAG...
AND WITH IT MY MEGA-ROD!!
F-FANCY MAN... WH-WHO...WHO WAS THAT...???
D-DUNNO...
BUT... THAT CUTPURSE WHO JUST SNATCHED HER BAG...
... JUST MADE THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF HIS MISERABLE LIFE!
SH-SHE'S COMIN' AFTER ME!
WHO IS THIS CRAZY BROAD?
5

GOT ONE CHANCE!
IF I C'N SLOW 'ER DOWN FER JUS' TWO SECONDS...
...THERE'S A MANHOLE NEAR HERE, I C'N GET INTA TH' SEWERS, AN' SHE'LL NEVER FIND ME!
THIS IRON GRATIN' SHOULD STOP HER JUST LONG ENOUGH...
FOOL!
KA-RANG!
DID YOU REALLY EXPECT SUCH A FLIMSY BARRIER TO STOP ONE WHO WAS ONCE A SOLDIER OF DARKSEID'S FEMALE TASK FORCE?
IE'S DUCKING INTO THAT HOLE IN THE PAVE-MENT.
HEADING UNDERGROUND LIKE THE WORM HE IS!
NO MATTER.
BIG BARDA IS NOT AFRAID TO FOLLOW!
6


SHE'S STILL FOLLOWIN' ME!
SHE MUS' BE PART HOUN' DOG, THAT ONE!
I GOTTA GET...

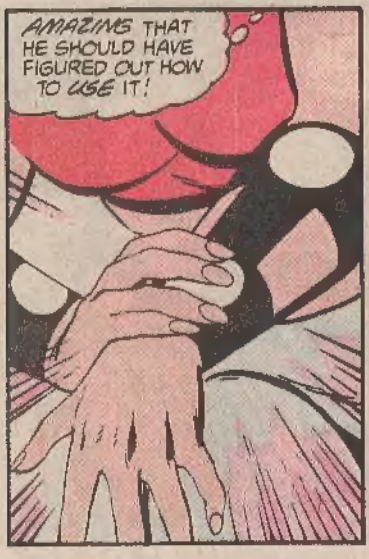
HHHURGHLH!!

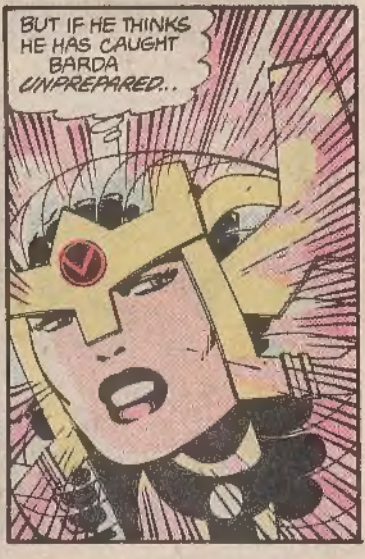
WHAT HAVE YOU CAUGHT, LITTLE FRIEND?
LET ME SEE.

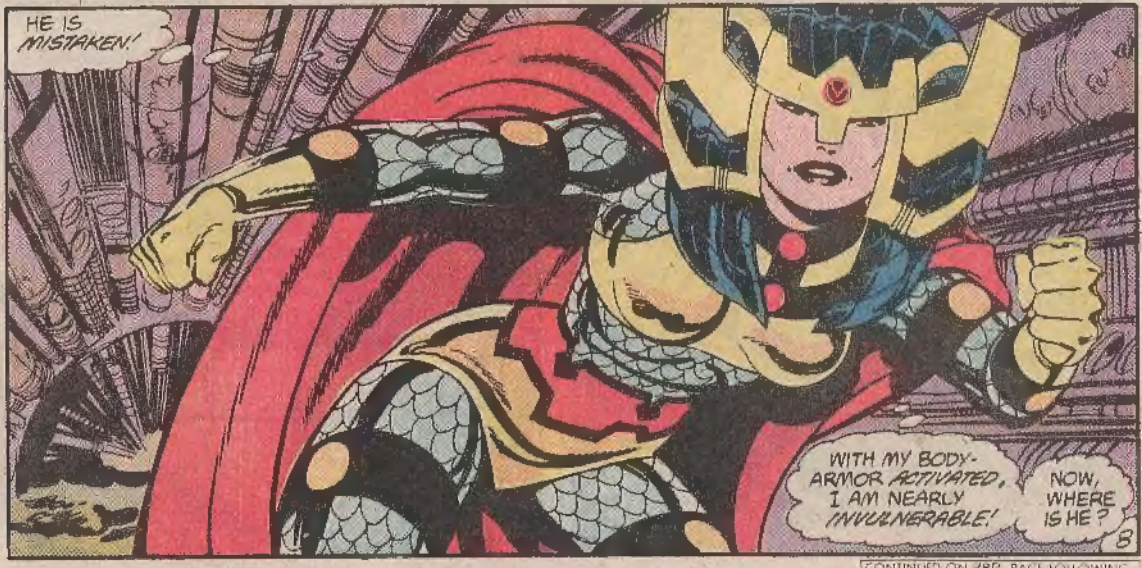
HMM...
A COMMON THIEF? HOW DISAPPOINTING.
PERHAPS HIS PRIZE WILL CONTAIN...

?!?
A MEGA-ROD!!

HE STOLE THIS FROM A NATIVE OF APOKOLIPS!
PERHAPS SOMEONE WHO IS STILL CLOSE BY.
AS CLOSE AS THE HOUR OF MY VENGEANCE!!







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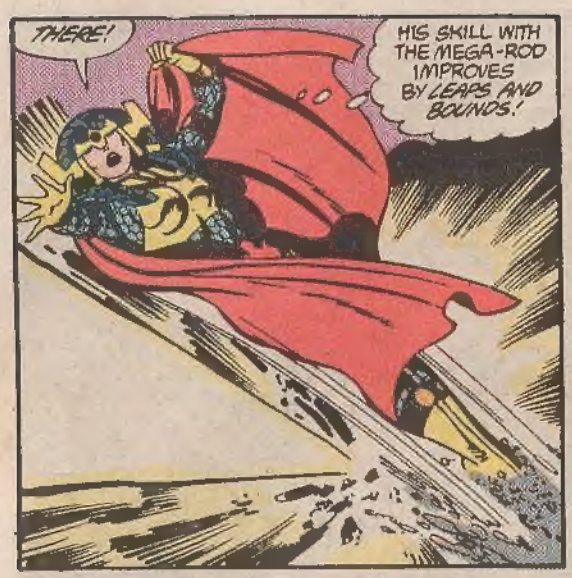
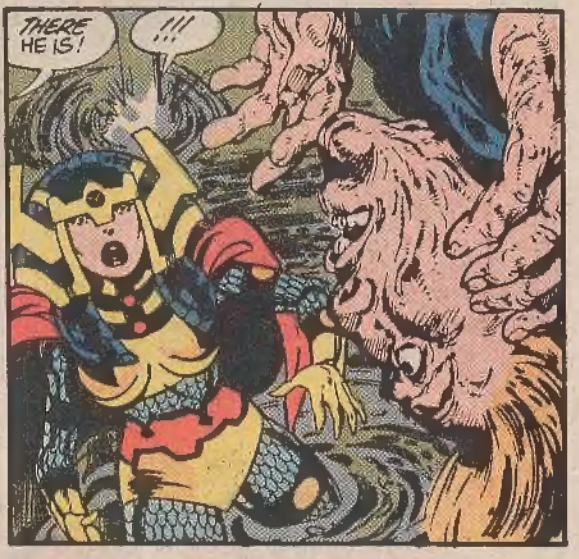
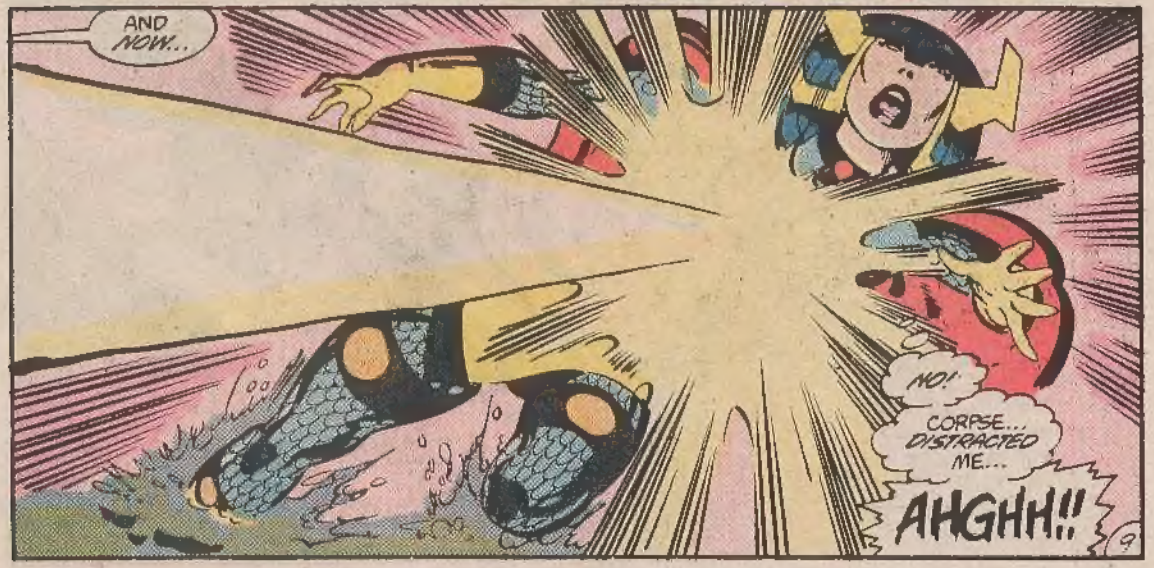
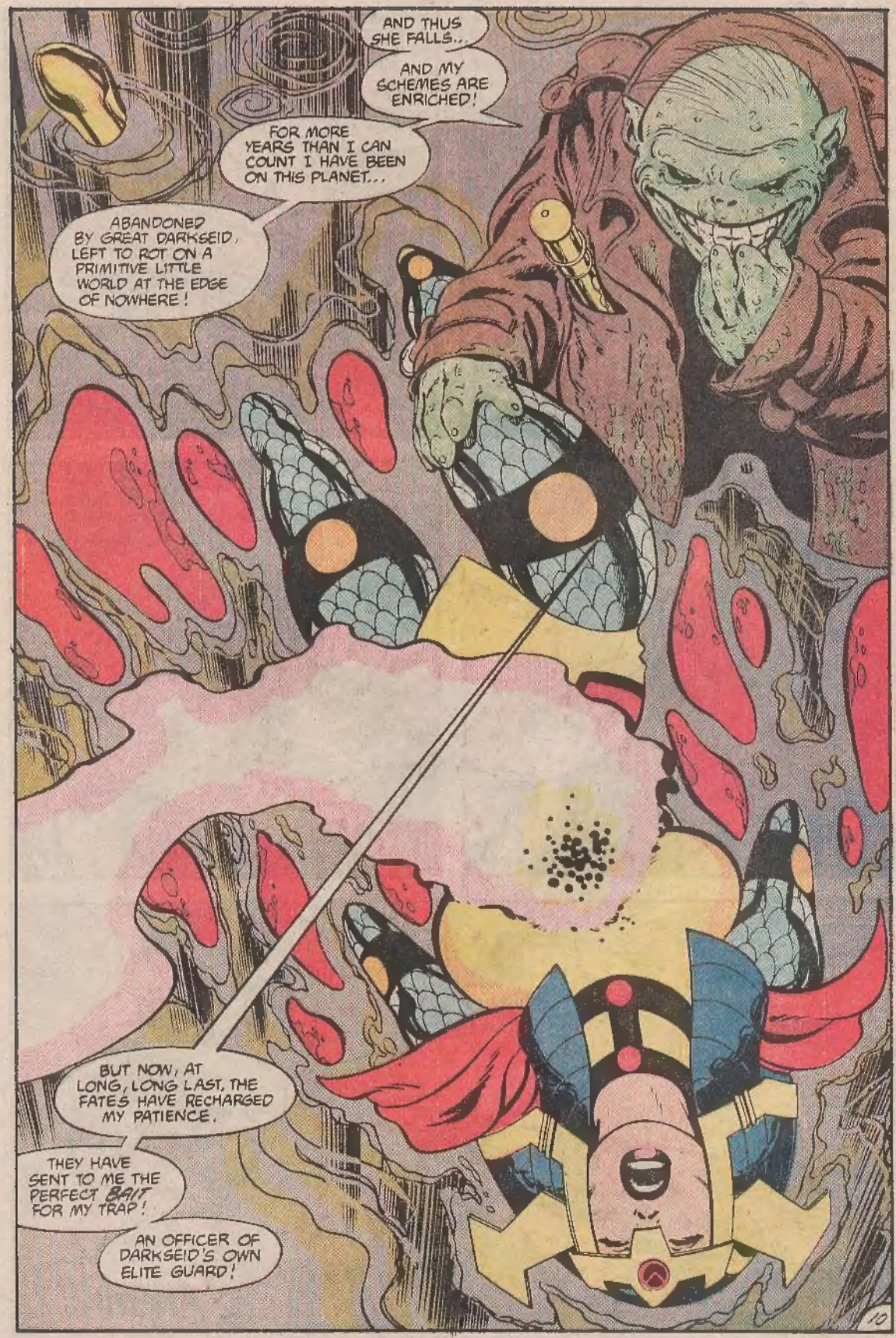

THERE!
HIS SKILL WITH THE MEGA-ROD IMPROVES BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS!

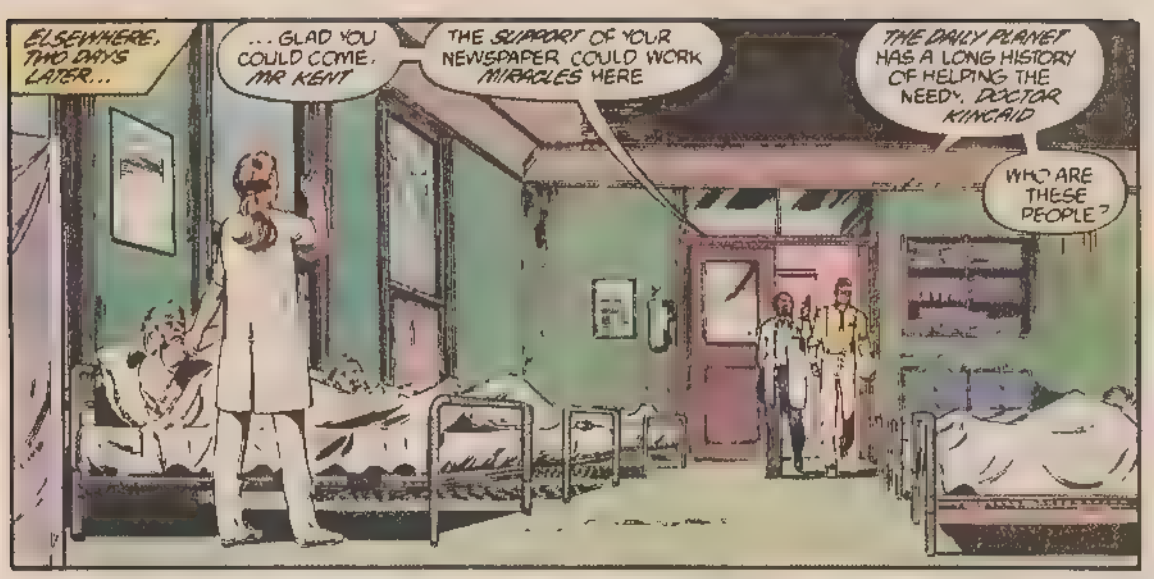
ONE WOULD ALMOST THINK HE WAS APOKOLIPS-TRAINED!
SHOW YOURSELF, KNAVE! I WEARY OF THIS GAME!

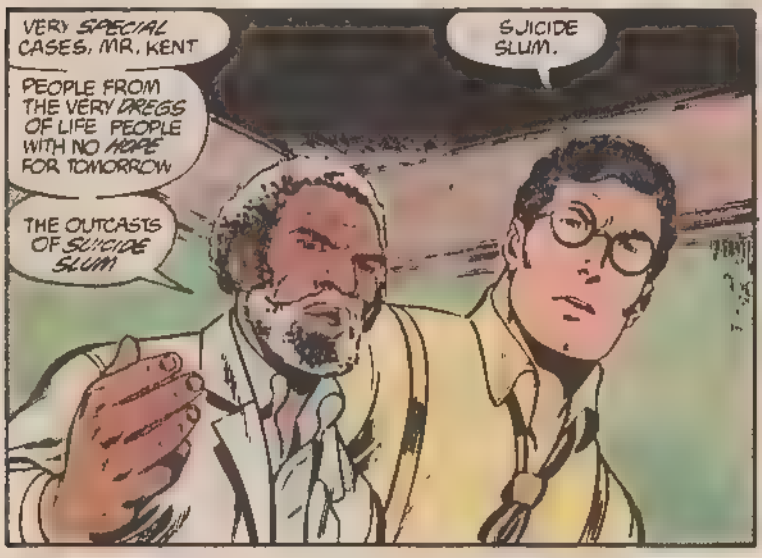
YOU SEEK THE SCOUNDREL WHO STOLE YOUR BAG, BIG BARDA?
EH...?


THERE HE IS!
!!!

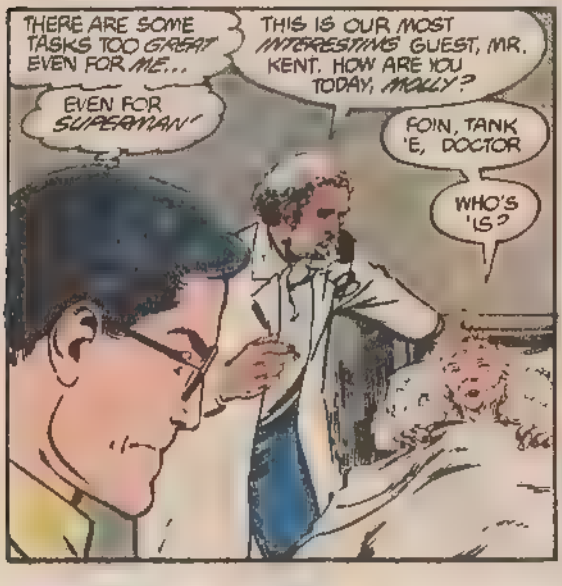

AND NOW...
NO!
CORPSE... DISTRACTED ME...
AHGHH!!
9

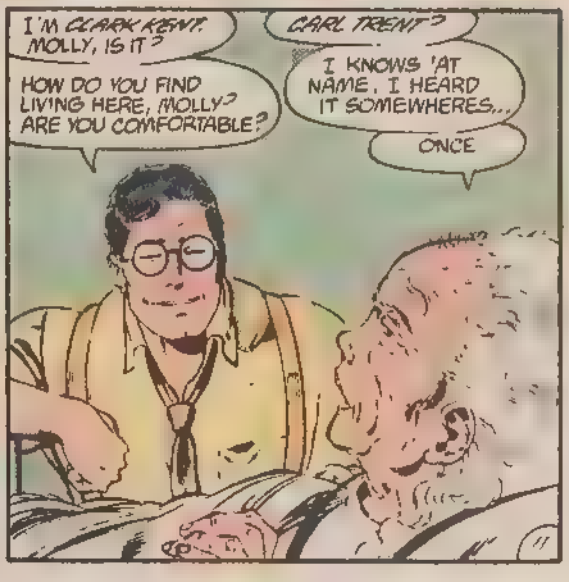

AND THUS SHE FALLS...
AND MY SCHEMES ARE ENRICHED!
FOR MORE YEARS THAN I CAN COUNT I HAVE BEEN ON THIS PLANET...
ABANDONED BY GREAT DARKSEID, LEFT TO ROT ON A PRIMITIVE LITTLE WORLD AT THE EDGE OF NOWHERE!
BUT NOW, AT LONG, LONG LAST, THE FATES HAVE RECHARGED MY PATIENCE.
THEY HAVE SENT TO ME THE PERFECT BAIT FOR MY TRAP!
AN OFFICER OF DARKSEID'S OWN ELITE GUARD!

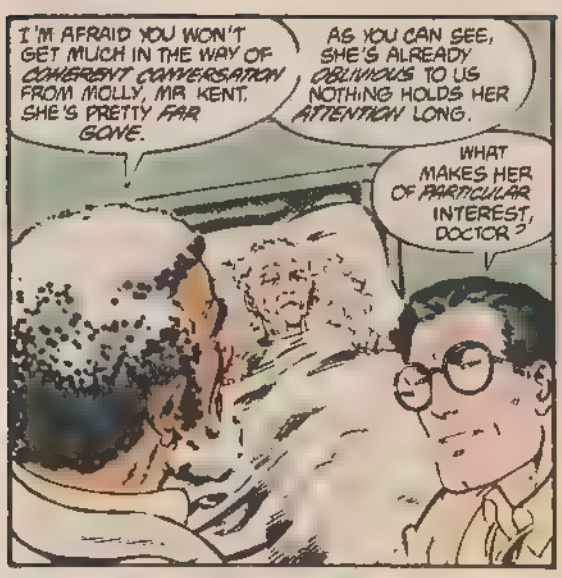

ELSEWHERE, TWO DAYS LATER...
... GLAD YOU COULD COME, MR KENT
THE SUPPORT OF YOUR NEWSPAPER COULD WORK MIRACLES HERE
THE DAILY PLANET HAS A LONG HISTORY OF HELPING THE NEEDY, DOCTOR KINCAID
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

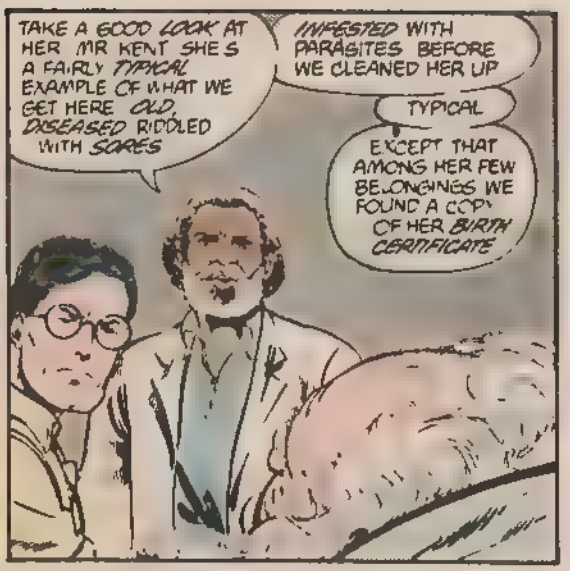

VERY SPECIAL CASES, MR. KENT
SUICIDE SLUM.
PEOPLE FROM THE VERY DREGS OF LIFE PEOPLE WITH NO HOPE FOR TOMORROW
THE OUTCASTS OF SUICIDE SLUM

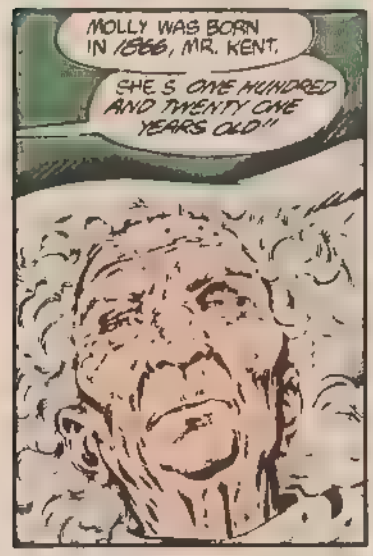
TWO WORDS THAT WILL ALWAYS BE THORNS IN MY SIDE WHEN I FIRST CAME TO METROPOLIS I TRIED TO CLEAN UP SUICIDE SLUM
I FAILED

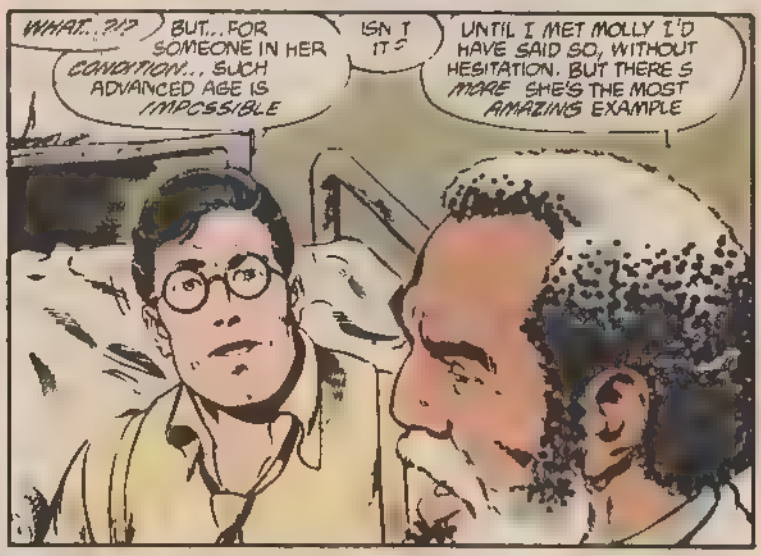

THERE ARE SOME TASKS TOO GREAT EVEN FOR ME...
EVEN FOR SUPERMAN
THIS IS OUR MOST INTERESTING GUEST, MR. KENT. HOW ARE YOU TODAY, MOLLY?
FOIN, TANK 'E, DOCTOR
WHO'S 'IS?

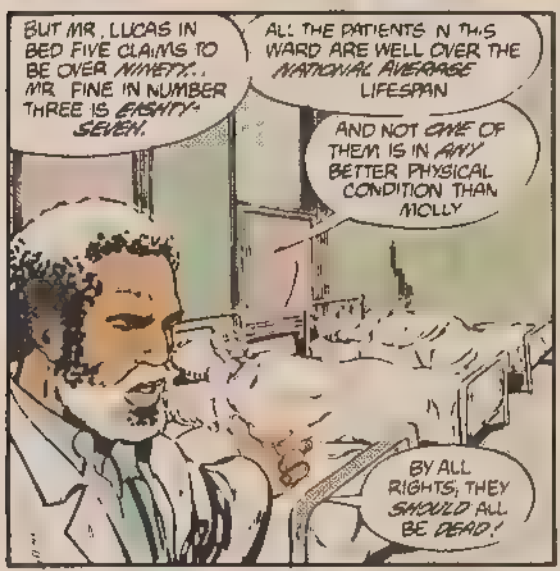

I'M CLARK KENT, MOLLY, IS IT?
HOW DO YOU FIND LIVING HERE, MOLLY? ARE YOU COMFORTABLE?
CARL TRENT?
I KNOWS 'AT NAME. I HEARD IT SOMEWHERES...
ONCE

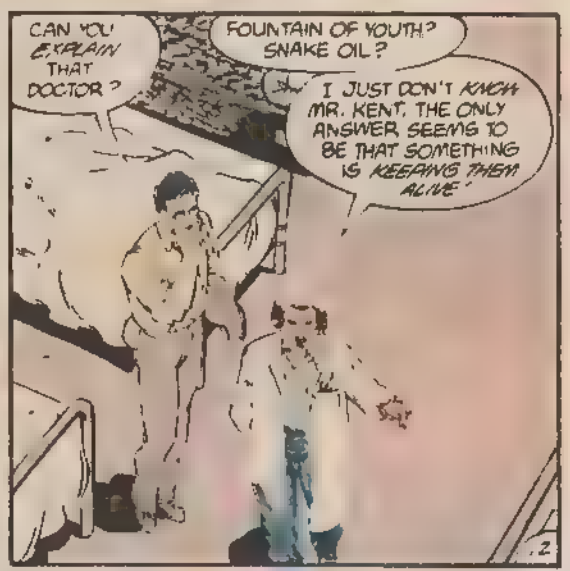

I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T GET MUCH IN THE WAY OF COHERENT CONVERSATION FROM MOLLY, MR. KENT. SHE'S PRETTY FAR GONE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, SHE'S ALREADY OBLIVIOUS TO US NOTHING HOLDS HER ATTENTION LONG.
WHAT MAKES HER OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, DOCTOR?

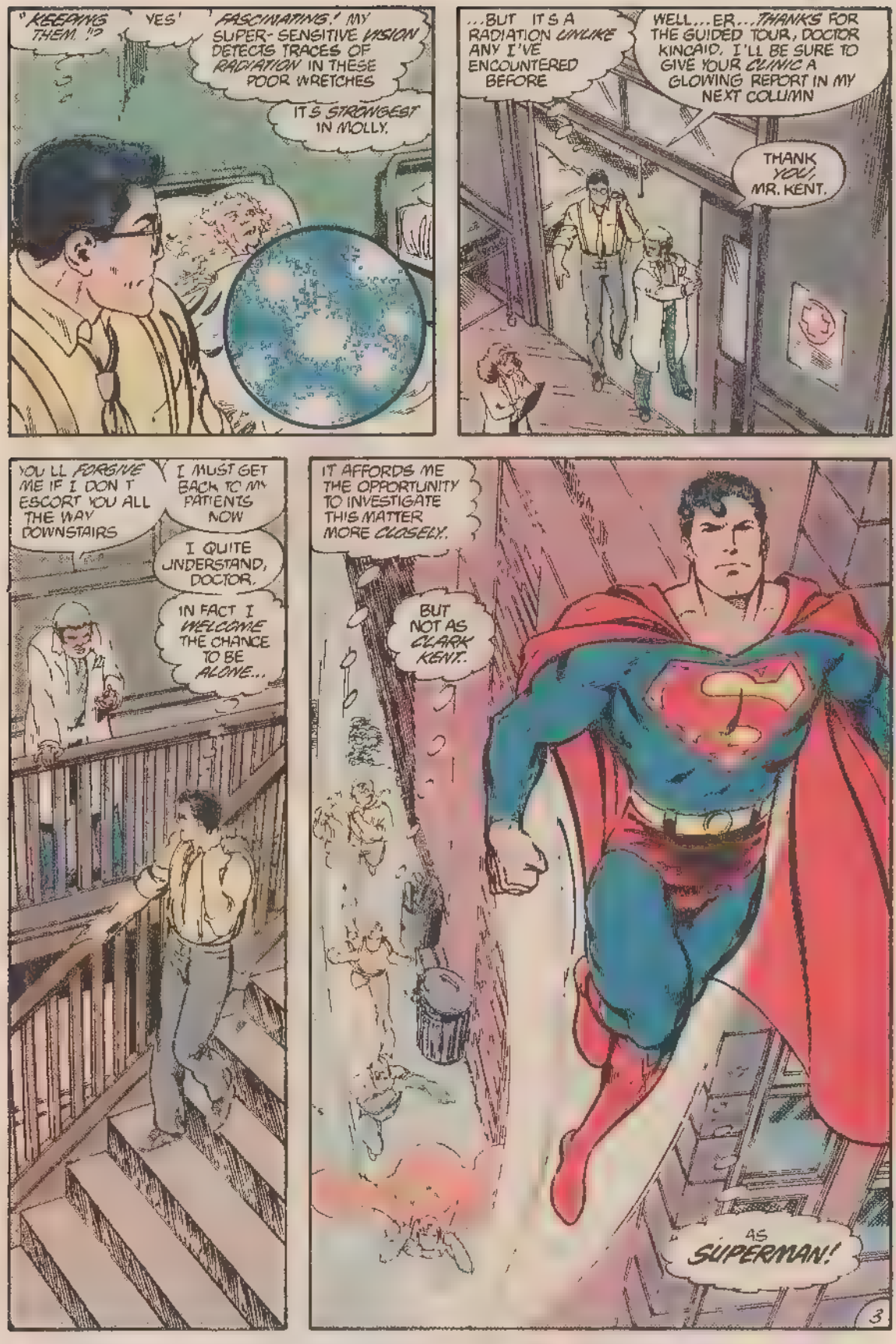

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT HER MR KENT SHE'S A FAIRLY TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE GET HERE OLD, DISEASED RIDDLED WITH SORES
INFESTED WITH PARASITES BEFORE WE CLEANED HER UP
TYPICAL
EXCEPT THAT AMONG HER FEW BELONGINGS WE FOUND A COPY OF HER BIRTH CERTIFICATE

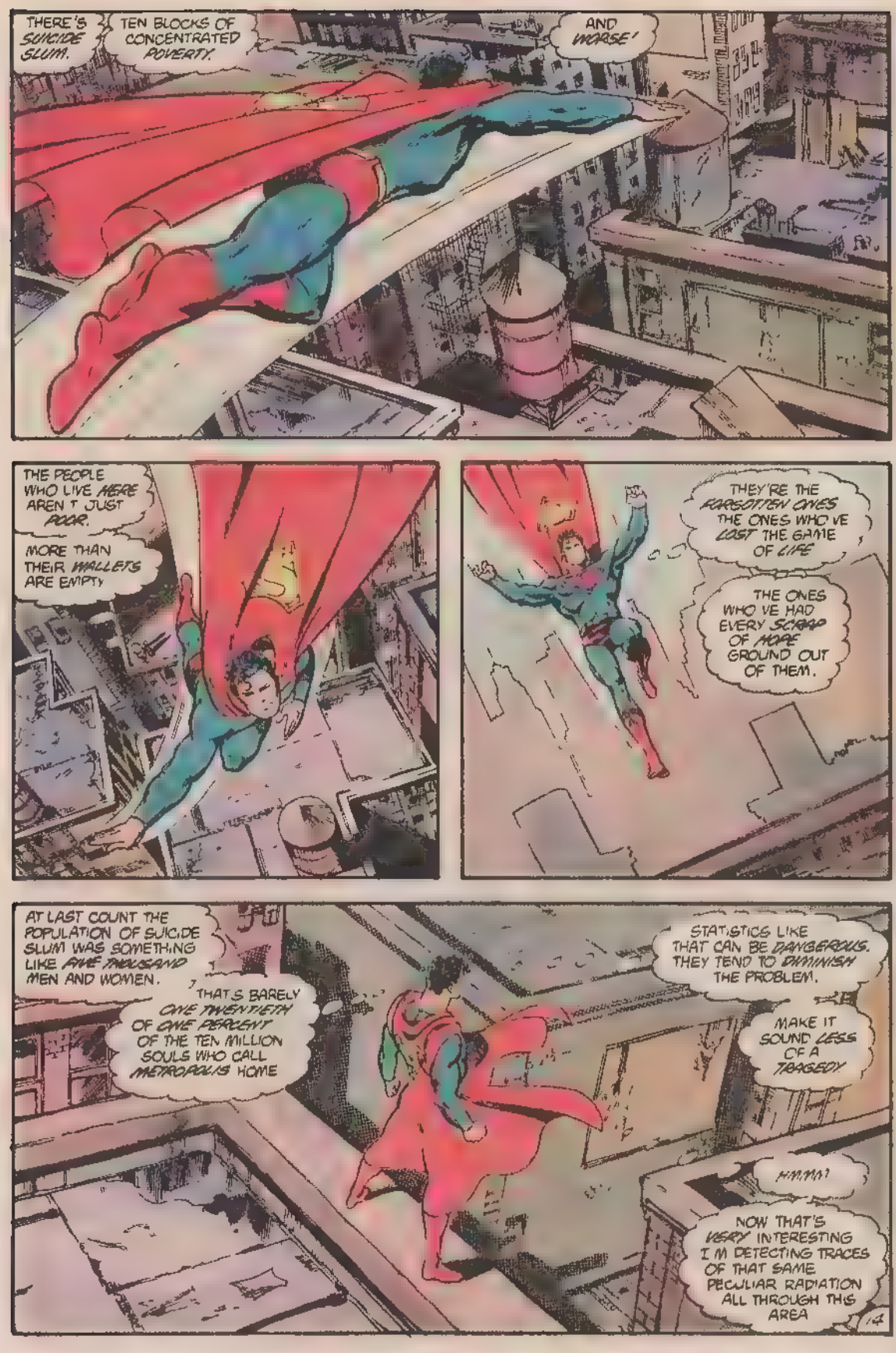

MOLLY WAS BORN IN 1866, MR. KENT.
SHE'S ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY ONE YEARS OLD!!

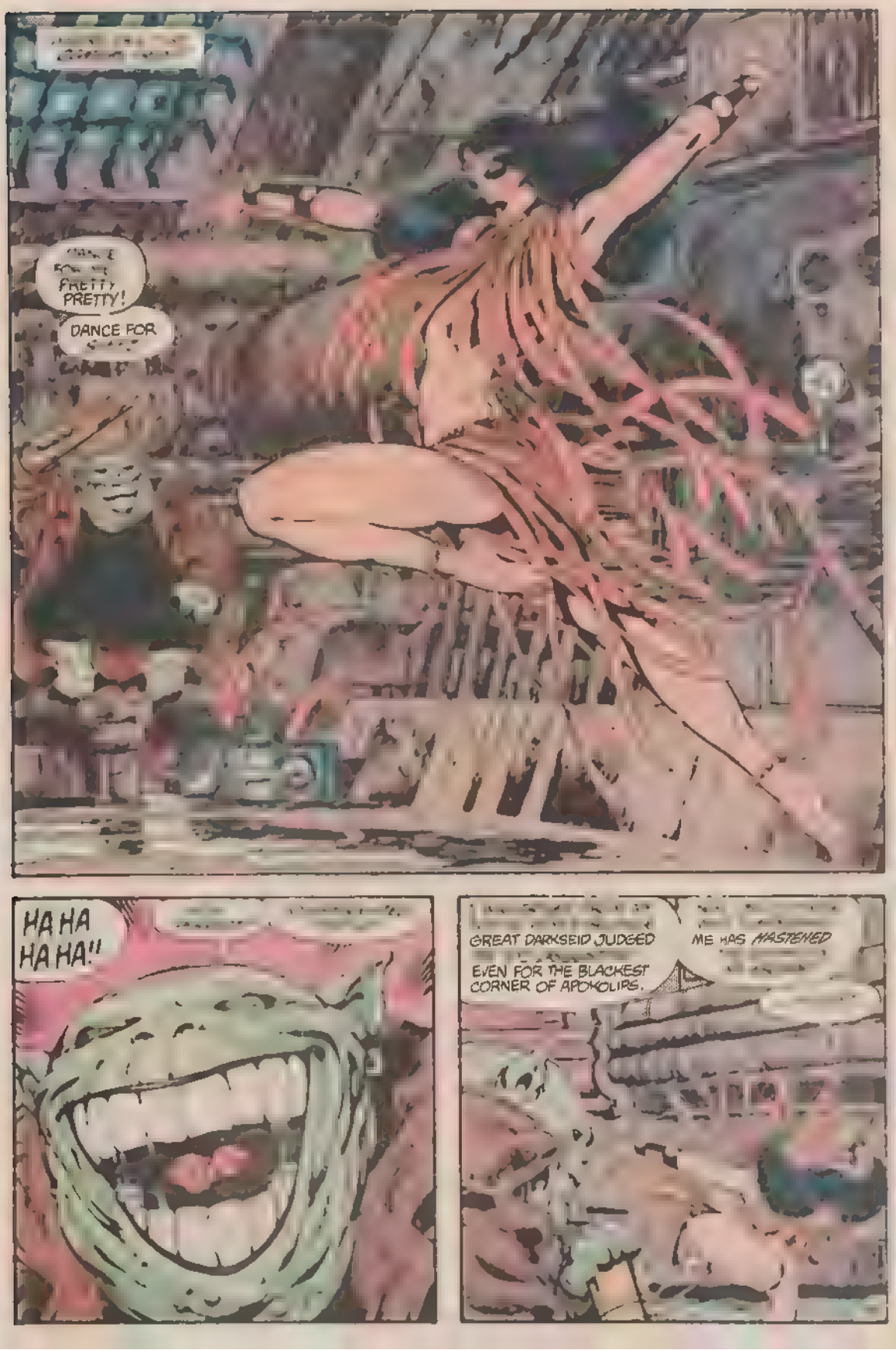

WHAT..?!?
BUT...FOR SOMEONE IN HER CONDITION... SUCH ADVANCED AGE IS IMPOSSIBLE
ISN'T IT?
UNTIL I MET MOLLY I'D HAVE SAID SO, WITHOUT HESITATION. BUT THERE'S MORE SHE'S THE MOST AMAZING EXAMPLE

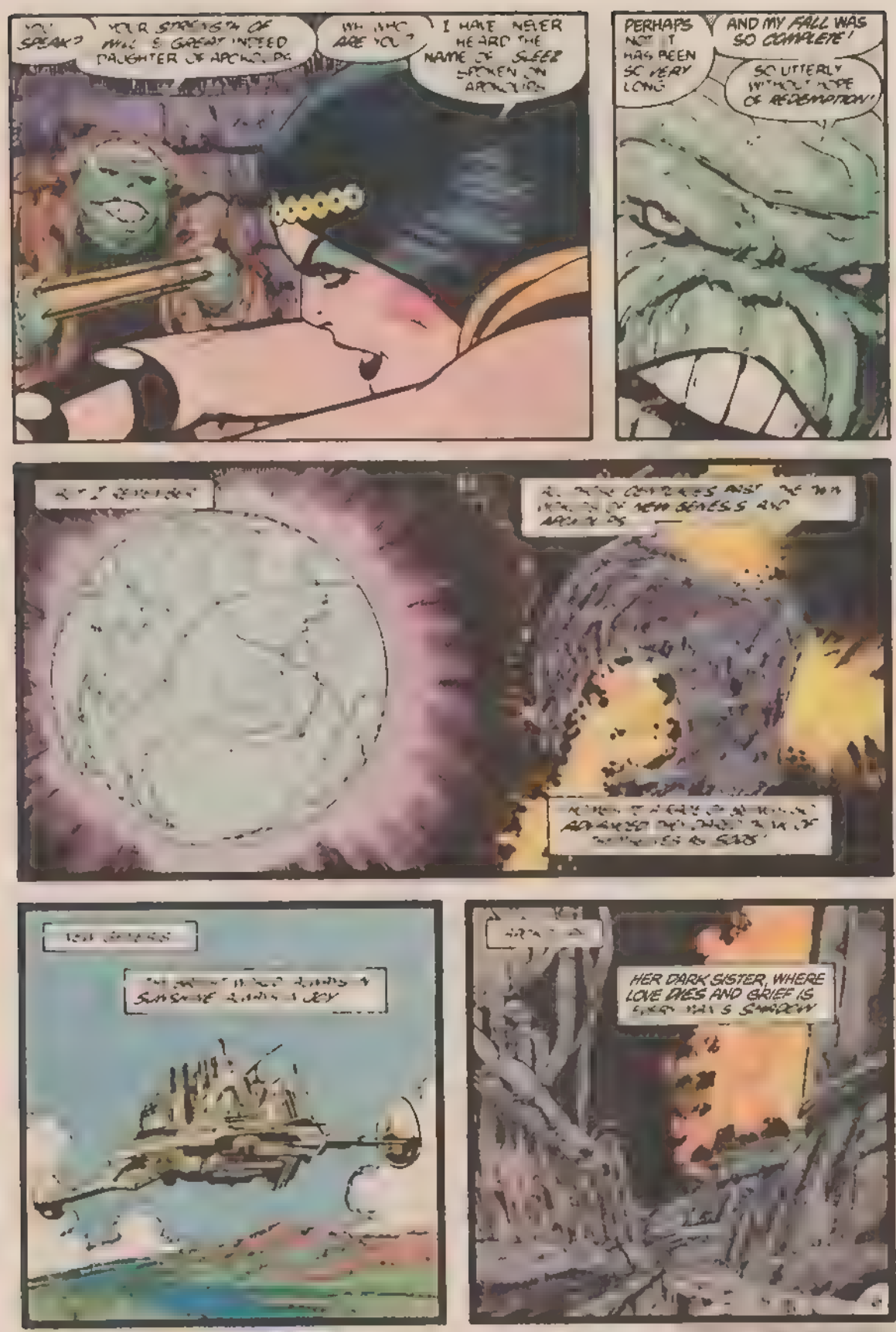

BUT MR. LUCAS IN BED FIVE CLAIMS TO BE OVER NINETY... MR. FINE IN NUMBER THREE IS EIGHTY-SEVEN.
ALL THE PATIENTS IN THIS WARD ARE WELL OVER THE NATIONAL AVERAGE LIFESPAN
AND NOT ONE OF THEM IS IN ANY BETTER PHYSICAL CONDITION THAN MOLLY
BY ALL RIGHTS, THEY SHOULD ALL BE DEAD!


CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT DOCTOR?
FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH? SNAKE OIL?
I JUST DON'T KNOW MR. KENT, THE ONLY ANSWER SEEMS TO BE THAT SOMETHING IS KEEPING THEM ALIVE!

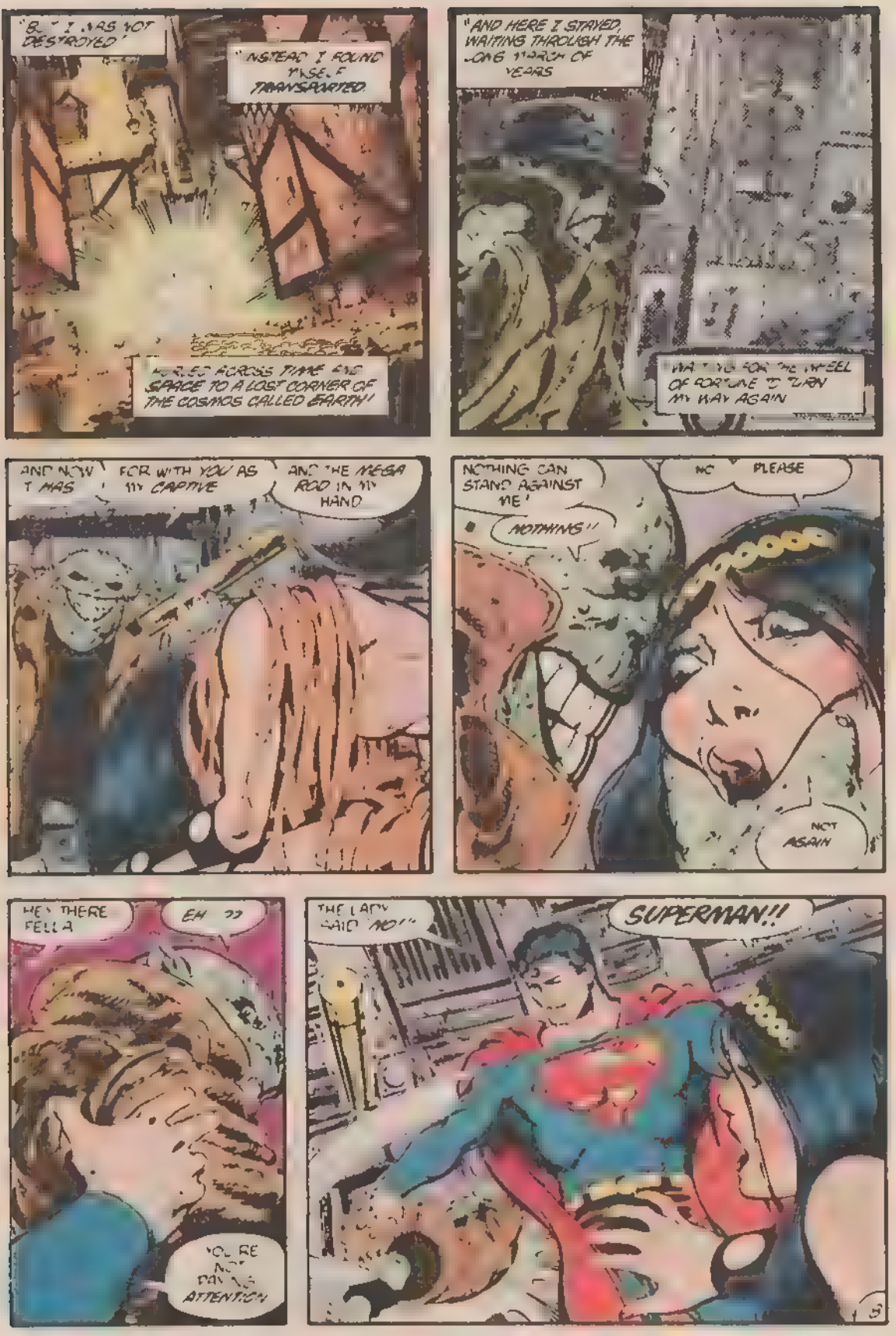

"KEEPING THEM, !?
YES'
FASCINATING.' MY SUPER-SENSITIVE VISION DETECTS TRACES OF RADIATION IN THESE POOR WRETCHES
IT'S STRONGEST IN MOLLY.
...BUT IT'S A RADIATION UNLIKE ANY I'VE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE
WELL...ER...THANKS FOR THE GUIDED TOUR, DOCTOR KINCAID. I'LL BE SURE TO GIVE YOUR CLINIC A GLOWING REPORT IN MY NEXT COLUMN
THANK YOU, MR. KENT.
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T ESCORT YOU ALL THE WAY DOWNSTAIRS
I MUST GET BACK TO MY PATIENTS NOW
I QUITE UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR.
IN FACT I WELCOME THE CHANCE TO BE ALONE...
IT AFFORDS ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER MORE CLOSELY.
BUT NOT AS CLARK KENT.
AS SUPERMAN!
3

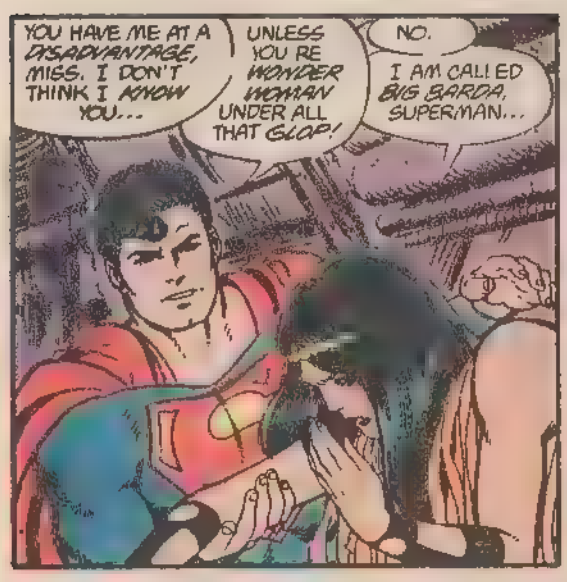

THERE'S SUICIDE SLUM.
TEN BLOCKS OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY.
AND WORSE!
THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE AREN'T JUST POOR.
MORE THAN THEIR WALLETS ARE EMPTY.
THEY'RE THE FORGOTTEN ONES THE ONES WHO'VE LOST THE GAME OF LIFE
THE ONES WHO'VE HAD EVERY SCRAP OF HOPE GROUND OUT OF THEM.
AT LAST COUNT THE POPULATION OF SUICIDE SLUM WAS SOMETHING LIKE FIVE THOUSAND MEN AND WOMEN.
THAT'S BARELY ONE TWENTIETH OF ONE PERCENT OF THE TEN MILLION SOULS WHO CALL METROPOLIS HOME
STATISTICS LIKE THAT CAN BE DANGEROUS. THEY TEND TO DIMINISH THE PROBLEM.
MAKE IT SOUND LESS OF A TRAGEDY
HMMM?
NOW THAT'S VERY INTERESTING I'M DETECTING TRACES OF THAT SAME PECULIAR RADIATION ALL THROUGH THIS AREA

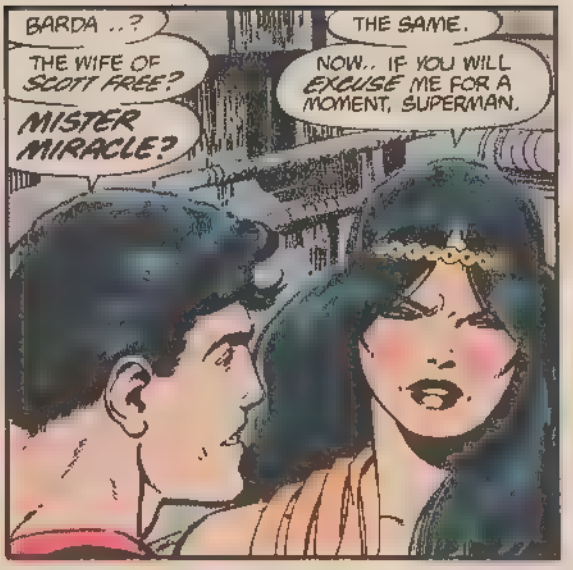

PRETTY PRETTY!
DANCE FOR
HA HA HA HA!!
GREAT DARKSEID JUDGED
ME HAS HASTENED
EVEN FOR THE BLACKEST CORNER OF APOKOLIPS.


YOU SPEAK?
YOUR STRENGTH OF WILL IS GREAT INDEED DAUGHTER OF APOKOLIPS
WHO WHO ARE YOU?
I HAVE NEVER HEARD THE NAME OF SLEER SPOKEN ON APOKOLIPS
PERHAPS NOT IT HAS BEEN SO VERY LONG
AND MY FALL WAS SO COMPLETE!
SO UTTERLY WITHOUT HOPE OF REDEMPTION!
HER DARK SISTER, WHERE LOVE DIES AND GRIEF IS

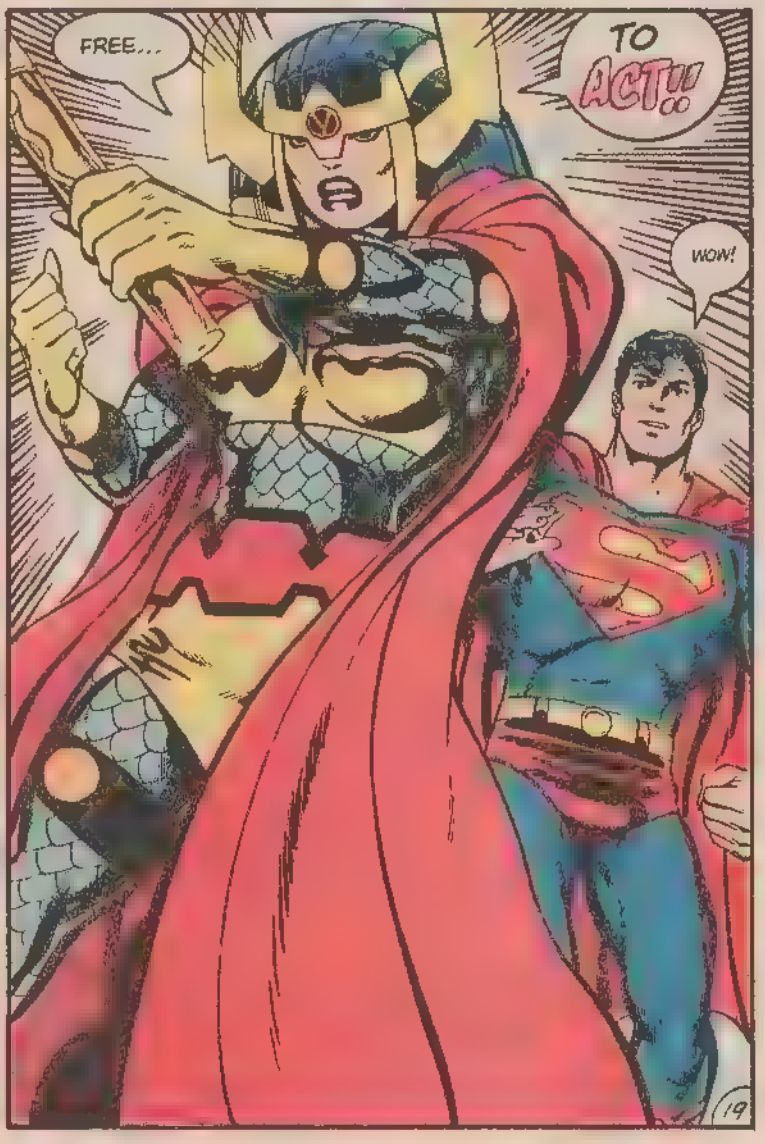
"IN THE SWELTERING DARKNESS OF THE LOWEST LEVELS OF THAT WORLD, I FIRST CAME TO SELF-AWARENESS
"I LIVED, I THOUGHT, AND I KNEW I HAD POWER!
"POWER ENOUGH TO BRING ME UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF DARKSEID!
"A YOUNG DARKSEID THEN NOT YET MASTER OF EITHER APOKOLIPS OR HIS OWN DARK POWERS
"HE MADE ME HIS SERVANT, HIS AIDE. EVEN HIS COUNCILLOR
"WE LEARNED MUCH FROM EACH OTHER. MUCH OF THE HIDDEN FACE OF HUMANITY.
"DARKSEID POINTED OUT TO ME THE PATHWAYS TO REALMS WHERE MY POWER BURNED BRIGHT!
"BUT THERE CAME A TIME OF CHANGES. PETTY CRUELTIES AMUSED HIM LESS AND LESS. HIS MIND TURNED TO THE GREATER WORKINGS OF THE UNIVERSE!
"I FELL FROM FAVOR
"ON THAT DAY WAS I THE FIRST TO KNOW THE TOUCH OF DARKSEID'S OMEGA BEAMS!
"FOR AN INSTANT THAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY I WAS LESS THAN NOTHING!
17


"BUT I WAS NOT DESTROYED"
INSTEAD I FOUND MYSELF TRANSPORTED
HURLED ACROSS TIME AND SPACE TO A LOST CORNER OF THE COSMOS CALLED EARTH!
"AND HERE I STAYED, WAITING THROUGH THE LONG MARCH OF YEARS
WAITING FOR THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE TO TURN MY WAY AGAIN
AND NOW I HAS FOR WITH YOU AS MY CAPTIVE
AND THE MEGA ROD IN MY HAND
NOTHING CAN STAND AGAINST ME!
NOTHING!!
NO PLEASE
NOT AGAIN
HEY THERE FELLA
EH ??
YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION
THE LADY SAID "NO!"
SUPERMAN!!
9


YOU HAVE ME AT A DISADVANTAGE, MISS. I DON'T THINK I KNOW YOU...
UNLESS YOU RE WONDER WOMAN UNDER ALL THAT GLOP!
NO.
I AM CALLED BIG BARDA, SUPERMAN...


BARDA ..?
THE WIFE OF SCOTT FREE?
MISTER MIRACLE?
THE SAME.
NOW.. IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT, SUPERMAN.

YOUR SUDDEN INTRUSION HAS BROKEN SLEEZ'S MIND CONTROL.
I AM FREE OF HIS POWER


FREE...
TO ACT!!
WOW!

NOW, SLEEZ, IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO PAY!
PAY FOR THE INDIGNITIES WHICH YOU HEAPED UPON ME IN THE PAST TWO DAYS!
AHHGH!!
BARDA!
NO!!
SUPERMAN...??
YOU... YOU STOP ME..??
I HAVE TO, BARDA THERE'S MORE TO ALL THIS THAN YOU UNDERSTAND!
INDEED THERE MUST BE...
IF YOU ARE ALSO A PAWN OF SLEEZ!
BUT I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
HEY!!
20

SLEEZ LEARNED MUCH AT DARKSEID'S RIGHT HAND!
YOUR "RESCUE" WAS TOO CONVENIENT, "SUPERMAN."
I SEE YOU NOW FOR WHAT YOU ARE!
AHGGH!
YOU ARE ANOTHER PART OF SLEEZ'S PLAN TO BREAK MY WILL!
BUT THE FULL FORCE OF MY MEGA-ROD WOULD FELL EVEN THE REAL SUPERMAN!
BARDA... NOOOO OUFF!!
BUT IT WILL NOT WORK!
BARDA SHALL NOT BE BROKEN!!
BARDA SHALL WIELD THE KILLING BLOW!!
EH??
I THINK NOT, MY PRETTY, PRETTY.

AND NOW...
NO-OOHH!!
HAHAHAHAHA
NEXT: HE'S CALLED THE SUPER ESCAPE-ARTIST... BUT CAN EVEN MISTER MIRACLE SURVIVE...
THE SUICIDE SNARE??

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L-2852

Dear Andrew and Mike:

ACTION #588 was the best issue yet since John Byrne started on the title. This was a tale in which the majesty and—in the Thanagarians' case—the royalty of the heroes really shone through. This is the way Superman should be done, and also the way the Hawks look best. They're amongst my favorite characters, and I loved seeing them here.

The cover was worth the price of the book alone. I wish you'd reprint it without the titles, etc., it would make a great pinup. As a chapter in the conclusion of the Shadow War, the most decisive blow yet has been delivered, by the Overlord Tactic (where did that one come from?) although it seems to have left the Man of Steel in a bit of trouble, if those really are red suns he's now in the midst of. No doubt the Green Lanterns will effect a rescue, as I haven't heard anything about the entire Superman line of comics being cancelled.

John's art was at its detailed best on this issue and Dick Giordano, always a good inker, is eminently suitable for John's pencils (along with the other inkers he's been recently working with—Terry Austin and Karl Kesel). It must take a while to go over the large amount of pencils John produces, but the effect makes it worthwhile. His treatment of Carter and Shayera (a much underrated heroine) was perfect. I presume they'll be back next issue? All that remains is for them to resume their rightful places in the Justice League.

As for the PHANTOM STRANGER mini-series, you can count on me as a definite reader. Who's the pair of artists you've got lined up? I'd guess at the Buscemas or John Buscema with Tom Palmer—that would be a great team for the Stranger.

Anyway, ACTION is holding its own amongst all the titles DC is improving so much. Long may it continue this way. Until next time, take care.

Malcolm Bourne
87 Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood
London NW2 1HU
England

Your're right about John Byrne's pencils—they are a lot of work for an inker. But the results are definitely worth it!! Karl's even been working out to get his inking muscles in shape for next month's issue of SUPERMAN!

And about the team of artists on the PHANTOM STRANGER, Mac—no, we haven't lined up Los Brothers Buscema—but we have looked around us and lured a couple of the best talents in the comics industry to team-up with DC for this project! Ready? Pencilling the Stranger's latest adventure will be Mike Mignola, of Alpha Flight *and* Corum *fame, and inking will be P. Craig Russell, of just about everything fame! Not bad, eh? You're right—it looks great! Pick it up, and see for yourself, in a month or so!*

Mike's also taken on the pencilling chores for the WORLD OF KRYPTON, a four issue mini-series chronicling the very, very early days of the Man of Steel's planet of birth! Watch for this one later this summer, gang!

* * * * *

Dear John, Dick, Andy, and Mike:

The "new" ACTION COMICS is definitely a book that lives up to its name! Ever since Superman received his "face-lift" his adventures both solo and with various partners have been nothing short of action-packed and all out fun! I was a Superman fan since the age of five. I am twenty-four now and have not missed an issue yet. Face it guys, you (and your predecessors) have made me a fan for life!

Now it's future team-up time! In the future the characters I would love to see grace these pages are: the New Doom Patrol, Metamorpho—the Element Man, Christopher Chance, the Human Target, Black Lightning, Nightwing, Halo, Tovin, Mon-El, Captain Atom, Captain Marvel, and my definite must sees—Captain Comet, Aqualad, and (numero uno) Aquaman (in his new uniform)!

How about more interaction between Clark Kent and his liason/friend Police Inspector Bill Henderson? Anyone who has ever watched the Superman television series knows what a great team they make! Involving the two (and maybe Jimmy and Lois as well) in a really brain-twisting, who-dunnit, murder mystery would be fantastic. I read somewhere that if Clark never became Superman he would have made a pretty fair detective. Here is an opportunity to prove it.

Thanks for the time and keep up the excellent work. Keep producing quality stuff like this and you will have a DC fan for life. But then again, I always was! Peace.

Wayne C. Brooks
5106 Duel Place N.E.
Capital Heights, MD 20743

Cut it out, Wayne, you're giving all of us here at DC swelled heads. (Especially Andy—or does he just need a hair cut?) Only kidding about cutting it out, though—we love hearing praise like that from readers like yourself! And thanks for reading Supes for nineteen years, Wayne—and you have our solemn promise that if you hang around for another nineteen, you'll be 43 years old! No kiddin' this time—we swear!

* * * * *

Dear Editors:

Y'know, as a child, I always loved team-up books. I enjoyed seeing big name heroes meeting up with each other, watching their reactions, praying silently that they would fight. But as I grew older, I became a little indifferent to the team-up concept, simply because they began to look more and more like two characters just thrown together; the writers paying little attention to such trivial things as plot lines, story, and (above all) plausibility. Would Super-hero "A" really have been flying past the abandoned castle on a far off planet when Super-hero "B" needed him? That sort of thing. Which brings me to my comments on ACTION #588.

Despite my avoidance of team-up books, I really got a kick out of "All Wars Must End," since it didn't look like a team-up book in the first place. Since Superman seems to be a super-hero's super-hero, it's believable that Hawkman would "call" Superman if things were getting a tad out of hand. Superman's impatience to find out just if and why he was needed seemed to indicate that this happens all the time, and I liked that. After all, it sounds plausible. It's also good to see Superman cracking jokes during the issue's space battle, instead of the solemn "do-or-die" attitude that we had come to expect of the old Kryptonian.

You made a jaded twenty plus years comic fan pick up a team comic, and for that I thank you. Just one question: why didn't Superman explode when he was knocked unconscious, with his mouth wide open, in deep space?

Doctor Turst
290 Springbank Dr.
London, Ontario

It was our pleasure to "de-jade-ify" you, Doc! It's always great to see someone getting excited about comics again. As for your last question—Supes is Kryptonian, not human, and isn't affected by exactly the same laws as we mere earthlings are (if you'd gone to law school instead of medical school, you'd have known that, Doc)!

* * * * *

Dear DC:

ACTION COMICS #588 was great. I can't believe I'm saying this about Superman, but since John took over and revitalized him words like "great," "fantastic," and "terrific," can now be associated with a once-boring Man of Steel. Not only that, but he's given Supes a much needed sense of humor; such as on page 9, when the Hawk's ship went out of control.

One question, however: Why do all super-villains scream, "No! It cannot be!" (or slight variations of such), when they see something going against their plans? Is it because they believe that simply by denying something it will instantly cease to exist?

Once again we readers see manifestations of John's love of drawing alien machinery. Somehow he always manages to make things look really alien, while at the same time seeming functional. However, no matter how good the Hawks are at piloting, I find it very hard to believe that they could escape being hit by more than one piece of debris. Surely the Thanagarian fleet would not employ gunners with such horrible aim.

Mr. Byrne's Shayera is the most dynamic Hawkwoman I've seen in a while. The scenes of her taking on Byth and Darkwing on pp 16 & 17 were incredible! This is truly Hawkwoman at her fighting best. Too bad she won't be starring in these pages regularly.

Please allow me to ask one more question. I know Hawkwoman's mask has been different from her husband's for a long time (if it was ever like it at all). My question is simply, why? I like both styles but I'd just like to know why they're different.

I am looking forward to ACTION #589, something that, as I said before, hadn't happened for a long time before John took over.

Thank you, Mr. Byrne, for bringing excitement back into Superman.

Chris Boucher
145 Central Ave.
New Bedford, MA 02745

Hawkman and Hawkwoman are simply a different people—they express their individuality in the masks they wear. Do you wear the same shirts as your cousins, Chris?

* * * * *

Dear DC:

ACTION COMICS #588 was another great issue in this "new" series. I think it's a good way for John Byrne to get a feel for all the characters in the DC Universe. In every issue Superman shows his superiority and in turn is getting respect from some major characters. Superman taking on the whole Thanagarian fleet is a pretty awesome feat and I wouldn't be surprised if Hawkman and Hawkwoman weren't impressed. I can't wait for the Man of Steel to meet the Legion of Super-Heroes!

Billy Burns
No Address Given

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Dear Andy and Mike:

You have a very unhappy reader. The first three issues of the revamped ACTION were somewhat disappointing compared to the other two Superman titles. The Demon story was great—I immediately wrote and told you! "All Wars Must End" was a step backward.

Why? Because Hawkman was depicted as he was before the SHADOW WAR mini-series—bland. He flies, he talks to birds, and he knows his science. No more. Katar Hol has personality; Superman and Hawkwoman's co-star in ACTION #588 had none.

Why? Because John Byrne did merely the layouts and not the full pencils for the story. Dick Giordano's a fine inker, but his style should not overpower Byrne's. Where are the innovative Byrne layouts we saw in the previous issue? The artwork in the issue was really not up to standards.

The issue did have a great "poster-style" cover, and was the first team-up between Superman and the Winged Wonders in which Shayera wasn't largely ignored. It was also nice to have cross-continuity between ACTION and another DC title.

I hope I've been helpful and that I haven't just been a complaining nuisance. I'm generally thrilled with the revamped Superman, and I just want to help the creative team on ACTION reach their full potential. Teammate suggestions: Captain Atom, Black Orchid, Infinity, Inc.

Frank Balkin
No Address Given

We're glad that you liked the cover anyway, Frank! All comments are helpful... we like to know what our readers think, whether they like an issue or dislike it! But we like it better if you like it! Like, it's time to get to the next letter...

* * * * *

Andy and Mike:

Okay, I admit it. I'm prejudiced.

For the last year or so, I've been watching the Shadow War unfold in the Hawks' book. It seems a cop-out for the two to call for help at the war's climax. Couldn't they handle it by themselves without the Man of Steel's aid? I would like to think so. This sort of thing has happened before, in both DC and Marvel comics, and it does annoy me.

But I still liked ACTION despite my prejudice. It is always good to see Superman and the Hawks together, and John Byrne draws a nice Hawkwoman!

Future guest-stars: Plastic Man, The Atom, and The Joker. And don't feel obliged to have guest stars every issue, it could get dull.

Robin Anderson
Box 7003
Marquette, MI 49855

It's always good to overcome our prejudices, Robin! Yes, Hawkman and Hawkwoman may have been able to handle their problems by themselves, but we always feel the more the merrier! (By the way, what did you think of SUPERMAN #9, that one had the Joker take his shot at Metropolis?)

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Byrne:

I bought ACTION #588 because I enjoy the Hawks and wanted to see the breathtaking conclusion of the Shadow War. Suffice it to say, I was not disappointed.

Before I purchased this issue I could just see Superman taking over the whole issue leaving the Hawks as secondary characters in the conclusion of their own war. Thanks for proving me wrong. I shall never doubt you again. You can now consider me a regular reader of this title.

Jeffrey C. Wooten
Rt. 2, Box 66
Grifton, NC 28530

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Dear John:

Now this is more like it! Although your cover on HAWKMAN #10 was more attractive than that of ACTION #588, you were right on target when you labelled the latter issue as "The Epic Climax!!" Now this is the kind of impact I expected in the finish to the Shadow War!

With the first two pages, you have brought an epic perspective to the aftermath of the showdown with Deron Ved. Superman's aerial view and his sweep through the twisting passages of the Thanagarian complex bring home to the reader the widespread destruction.

As Superman and the Hawks take to space to confront the Thanagarian fleet, the real impact of the invasion is finally realized. The overwhelming odds are dramatically represented by the small shuttle craft lost against the backdrop of the full Thanagarian fleet. Now, THIS is the kind of climax the Shadow War storyline deserves! Even Superman has his hands full with this one!

But, it is truly fitting that the victory was really a result of the Hawks' determination and quick thinking (and a convenient contrivance named "Operation Overlord"). It was even nice to see that both Ved and Byth got one last shot in, even if Hawkwoman dispatched them a little too easily! If any mistake was made in this issue, it was in building such overwhelming odds that a device like the Overlord Effect was needed. But, believe me, this was much better than the anti-climactic section in HAWKMAN #10.

But as the ACTION draws to a close—what's this?!—a cliff-hanger of intergalactical proportions! A suspenseful plummet into the sun for the Hawks?! Superman—lost in space?! That can only mean one thing: my comments are—To Be Continued!!

Michael Christiansen
680 W. Benton Avenue
Naperville, IL 60540

Noooooo! We hate when that happens!!!